

Message Text

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ORIGIN SY-10

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CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 AF-10 ARA-16 EA-11 EUR-25 IO-13

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS PRIORITY

XMT AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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INFORM CONSULS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ASEC, PINS

SUBJECT: LETTER BOMB, U.K. EMBASSY, KINSHASA

FOLLOWING IS SUBSTANCE OF KINSHASA MESSAGES 8102 AND 8108,
SUBJECT: LETTER BOMB EXPLODES AT UK EMBASSY.

1. ACCORDING TO BRITISH EMBASSY SOURCES KINSHASA, A
LETTER BOMB BEARING FRENCH POSTAGE EXPLODED IN THE BRITISH
CHANCERY AT MID-MORNING ON MONDAY 17 SEPTEMBER. THE EMBASSY
SECURITY OFFICER WHO WAS OPENING THE LETTER BOMB RECEIVED
INJURIES TO HIS HAND. THE ORIGIN OF BOMB IS UNKNOWN, BUT
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BRITISH SOURCES SUSPECT THE IRA. THE LETTER BOMB CON-

SISTED OF A BROWN ENVELOPE 7" X 4 3/4" X 1/2" WHICH CONTAINED A BOOBY-TRAPPED PAPER BACK BOOK AND WEIGHED 8-10 OZ. THE BOOK ITSELF MEASURED 6 1/2" X 4 1/2" X 1/2".

2. THE BOMB PARTIALLY EXPLODED WHEN THE BOOK WAS WITHDRAWN APPROXIMATELY 1 1/2" FROM THE ENVELOPE. APPARENTLY THE BLASTING CAP, INTENDED TO IGNITE THE CHARGE, WAS IMPROPERLY INSTALLED AND WAS NOT IN LINE WITH THE EXPLOSIVE CHARGE. AS A RESULT, ONLY THE BLASTING CAP AND A SMALL AMOUNT OF THE CHARGE ACTUALLY EXPLODED, SERIOUSLY INJURING THE HAND OF THE BRITISH SECURITY OFFICER WHO WAS OPENING THE LETTER BOMB BUT NOT INJURING TWO OTHER PEOPLE STANDING NEAR TO HIM. IT IS SPECULATED THAT IF THE WHOLE CHARGE HAD IGNITED ALL THREE PERSONS WOULD HAVE BEEN KILLED.

3. ENVELOPE:

THE BROWN ENVELOPE WAS OF THE TYPE USED FOR PERIODICALS OR PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS. IT WAS HAND ADDRESSED IN ENGLISH IN LIGHT BLUE INK TO THE BRITISH EMBASSY KINSHASA (PRECISE WORDING AS YET UNKNOWN) HOWEVER THE PREVIOUS RATHER THAN THE PRESENT ADDRESS OF THE EMBASSY WAS INDICATED. "PAR AVION" WAS ALSO HAND-WRITTEN ON THE ENVELOPE. BRITISH EMBASSY SOURCES OPINED THAT THE HANDWRITING STYLE APPEARED TO BE OF A CHARACTER INDICATING THE WRITER TO BE FRENCH SCHOOL TRAINED. THE LETTER WAS AIR MAILED AND BORE A MACHINE-ISSUED POSTAGE STAMP FROM PARIS. POSTAGE WAS 17.50 FRANCS.

4. EXPLOSIVE CHARGE:

DARK BLACK MATERIAL SPECKED WITH WHITE CRYSTALS. THE MATERIAL APPEARED PLIABLE LIKE TAR AND OF SIMILAR CONSISTENCY. IT BORE A FAINT ODOR OF NITROGLYCERINE. AN ISRAELI SECURITY OFFICER FROM THE GOI EMBASSY KINSHASA SPECULATED THAT THE MATERIAL COULD BE TYPE 808 EXPLOSIVE OR "ALMOND SOAP". AN ORDINANCE OFFICER ATTACHED TO THE U.S. MILITARY MISSION KINSHASA, HOWEVER, THOUGH THE TYPE 808 MATERIAL WOULD BE TOO VOLATILE TO TAKE THE ROUGH TREATMENT OF THE MAIL; THEREFORE, THAT THE MATERIAL MUST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NOT BE TYPE 808. HE WAS NOT ABLE TO IDENTIFY THE MATERIAL, HOWEVER.

5. DETONATING DEVICE:

A SMALL FLAT NICKLE CADMIUM BATTERY CONNECTED TO STIPS OF TINFOIL CONTACTS GLUED TO OPPOSITE PAGES OF BOOK WHICH WERE KEPTSEPARATED BY A PIECE OF CARDBOARD GLUED TO

THE ENVELOPE. WHEN THE BOOK WAS WITHDRAWN THE TWO PIECES OF TINFOIL CAME INTO CONTACT AND THE BATTERY, ACTIVATED THE SMALL ELECTRIC COPPER BLASTING CAP (POSSIBLY A CAP SIMILAR TO A NUMBER 6 CAP), DETONATING THE CHARGE.

6. A/SY ATTEMPTING OBTAIN MORE DESCRIPTIVE DATA AND PHOTOGRAPHS.

7. ALL POSTS ARE REMINDED THAT CAREFUL SCREENING OF MAIL SHOULD BE CONTINUED AS LONG AS LETTER BOMBS CONTINUE TO APPEAR IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WORLD. RUSH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Concepts: BOMBING, EXPLOSIVES, POSTAL SERVICE, SECURITY CONTROLS, PERSONNEL SECURITY
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 SEP 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: collinp0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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ISecure: 1
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TAGS: ASEC, PINS, UK
To: ALL POSTS MULTIPLE
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